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Honoring the Life of Gary Laughlin: May 4, 1923-April 20, 2019

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Whether you knew him as a fellow marine, local philanthropist, avid golfer, NPS Foundation supporter, close friend, or as the man responsible for the endless supply of Jelly Belly candy at the NPSF cottage, Gary Laughlin was loved and admired by many. Over the years, he has

become a friendly and familiar face at the foundation cottage, beloved by the staff and students alike.

Gary has been a dedicated supporter and friend of the NPS Foundation for many years. In 2007, friends of his established the Gary Laughlin Patriot Award to honor Gary and his example of patriotism and courage as a Marine Corps pilot serving in World War II and the Korean War. Each year, the foundation presents this award to a distinguished NPS student. The award serves to encourage excellence at NPS by recognizing and rewarding exceptional academic distinction and leadership.

Friends of the NPS Foundation reflect on Gary's impact:

Gordon McCall: "Gary meant the world to me, as part father, part brother, and part very dear friend. In the last 30-plus years of our close friendship, listening to his lifelong stories is something I will cherish forever. I have never known a person who had experienced more of a full life than Gary Laughlin. From his career in the oil business, to a gentlemen road racer in the 1950s, a pillar in the world of golf, along with being a scratch player, and of course, as a Marine Corps aviator, his proudest achievement to his last day. Way back, when we sat down for lunch one day, I was reminiscing about a great cycling rivalry that I had with a Lt. Cmdr. stationed at NPS. During the conversation, I mentioned that I thought it was too bad the school didn't have it's own cycling club or team, and perhaps he and I could change that. Well, Gary hit the ground running with the NPS Foundation office. My wife Molly designed the jerseys, and next thing you know, there was an NPSF Cycling Club. Both she and I are so proud of what the club represents today, and it is just heartwarming for me to know that his initials will be on every club jersey, and that his legacy will be honored until the end of time. He was an extraordinary man that we were all blessed to know."

Colonel Todd Lyons: "I met Gary Laughlin (aka Quail) when he walked into my office in Herrmann Hall and asked, "Are you the new Marine?" He introduced himself and we started talking about his experiences in World War II and Korea. Ever the naval aviator, he was ready with photos and stories filled with grace and good humor. After a while, my wife Kristi stopped by for lunch and had the pleasure of meeting Gary for the first time. I'm not ashamed to say my wife sat enthralled listening to Gary talk about his brother, his early time in the Marine Corps, and forgot all about taking me out to eat. Quail had the ability to connect us to an earlier generation of Marines. His willingness to share those exploits and tales of friends long gone made each visit unique and memorable to those of us lucky enough to have spent any time with him. Almost 70 years after leaving the Marine Corps, Gary epitomized the phrase 'Once a Marine, Always a Marine.'"

Retired Admiral Henry Mauz: "Soon after I retired and moved to Pebble Beach, Gary Laughlin called me out of the blue. He asked if I was a retired admiral and, if so, would I like to join him for lunch. Of course I said yes. That began a friendship that lasted for almost 25 years. During those years, we became very close friends, traveling together, playing golf, discussing the state of the union and, especially, our great military. Gary was a proud Marine. He joined shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor as a freshman at the University of Texas. He became a Marine aviator and flew fighters off small carriers in the South Pacific. I know that experience shaped his life and contributed to his success as an independent producer of oil in Texas and also many foreign countries. Gary was blessed with many lifelong friends who appreciated his unflagging devotion to his country, his gift for storytelling and his admiration for the young people of our armed forces. He had very high standards for personal behavior and did not hesitate to tell even a four star admiral when to shape up. Gary was one of those rare, bigger-than-life people who leave a lasting legacy for those who were lucky enough to be his friends. He will be deeply missed."

David Silkey: "I have had the privilege to know Gary "Quail" Laughlin for 22 years and was blessed to be one of his many destinations on his daily "trap lines" for the past 10 of those years. Quail was a man of routines and our daily link-ups at The NPS Foundation, Lexus Monterey Peninsula and our homes always began the same way: I would say, 'How you doing Quail?' to which he would respond, 'I'm still vertical Wolfy.' I will always remember Quail as "vertical." Vertical as the great sequoias and redwoods that adorn the California landscape. A giant. Everyone wanted to be in Quail's company. The remarkable thing about Quail is that he shared his company unlike anyone I have ever known. The other "giants" Quail introduced me to personally were numerous — President George H.W. Bush, Admiral Mauz, Bill Warner, Peter Joyce, Jim Nantz, David Feherty, Gary Player, Jim Davis and the NPSF Cycling Club to name a few. Quail is directly responsible for many of my "I couldn't have ever imagined moments" in my life. Thanks Quail, you were deeply loved, admired and will never be forgotten. Wolfy out."

Contact Us

PO Box 8626

Monterey, CA 93943

E-mail: info@npsfoundation.org

*Phone: **831-901-3766***

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